



the LittleBand

featuring Keith Little, with Michael Witcher, Josh Tharp, Luke Abbott, & Steve Swan

Profile

Centered around the creative work of Keith Little (guitar-vocals), the LittleBand is a collaborative ensemble coming together to perform a diverse range of music. Rooted in bluegrass, gospel, and blues, the combination of fellow band members Michael Witcher (dobro-vocals), Josh Tharp (banjo-vocals), Luke Abbott (fiddle-vocals), and Steve Swan (string bass-vocals), produces a rich sound that is both authentic, and unique. *"I see music more as a shape, than a style",* observes Keith, *"round, like a supper plate, and this group can really serve it up. Each member brings their life's musical integrity to the band mix, which gives us a round sound, and richness of tone. The material we perform is taken from both traditional and contemporary sources, performed on acoustic instruments, and human voices (often in vibrant harmony), and rendered with heartfelt care".*

Keith Little / Guitar - Vocals

A native of the Sierra Nevada foothills of northern California, Keith is a nationally acclaimed musician, vocalist, recording artist, composer, and producer. Born into a musical family, he was first introduced to string band music by his father, and quickly developed on the guitar, five-string banjo, mandolin, and fiddle. Shortly after performing his first professional engagement in 1969, Keith met and began performing with local bluegrass legends Vern & Ray. This collaboration would eventually evolve into his tenure with Rose Maddox and the Vern Williams Band, in what has proven to be a milestone in west coast country music. Over a career spanning forty years, Keith has been an important member of many national touring bands (Country Gentlemen, Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder, Lonesome Standard Time), and has performed on the GRAMMY award winning recordings "The Grass Is Blue" and "Little Sparrow" by Dolly Parton, and "Another Country" by the Chieftains. An amazing vocalist, Keith is also a featured member of the David Grisman Bluegrass Experience, and the Peter Rowan Bluegrass Band. His compositions have been recorded by Crystal Gayle, Longview, Claire Lynch, Tim O'Brien, and the Whites (among others), and he is an honorary lifetime member of the California Bluegrass Association.

Michael Witcher / Dobro - Vocals

Growing up the youngest of five in a musical and artistic family in the suburbs of Los Angeles, Michael found his voice playing the dobro at the age of fourteen. In less than a year, he was playing with his father Dennis, and brother Gabe in their Bluegrass band, "The Witcher Brothers". A featured member of the Peter Rowan Bluegrass Band, Michael has also recorded or toured with Dwight Yoakam, Fernando Ortega, Laurie Lewis, Tyler Hilton, John Paul Jones, Sara Watkins, The Gibson Brothers, Dolly Parton, Joan Osborn, Willie Watson (Old Crow Medicine Show), and Chris Jones among others. Known for his rich tone and lyrical phrasing, Michael is also a highly sought after instructor.

Josh Tharp / Banjo - Vocals

Originally from Arizona, Josh began playing the banjo in 1996, and shortly thereafter took up guitar, mandolin, dobro, and string bass. The son of a pastor, he grew up singing in church and is a masterful harmony vocalist. Josh performed with regional Arizona bands until 2006, when he joined with the long time Southern California based "Lost Highway", spending two years (and bringing him to California). A talented luthier, Josh attended the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery and has been making guitars, mandolins, banjos, and dobros, ever since. He performs with the LittleBand on a banjo of his own making.

Luke Abbott / Fiddle - Vocals

Luke has been turning heads in the California music scene since 1998, when he began playing at bluegrass festivals at the age of eleven, simultaneously learning all the standard bluegrass instruments (banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin). Besides many years as the banjo player in his family's band, he has performed with other artists, including bluegrass greats Kathy Kallick and Frank Wakefield. His 2010 solo album, "Take Me Home" was recorded live in studio; Victory Music's review: "Luke's music completely blindsided me. He's got a great, crackly voice and is a monster picker."

Steve Swan / String Bass - Vocals

Having spent his first two years in Virginia, Steve grew up in Davis, and Sacramento, California. Coming from an electric blues and jazz background, at age 24 he borrowed a Kay string bass from a friend and was off to the races playing bluegrass. In 1979 Steve joined a Contra Costa County group that featured fiddler John Blasquez and 17 year old Jim Nunally. An 18 month stint in the Chico band "The Dusty Road Boys" with Sandy Rothman and Ed Neff was the setup to a move to San Francisco to spend two years with Butch Waller's "High Country". In 1998, Frank Wakefield summoned Steve for several California tours that included guitarist David Nelson. Steve also owns a guitar shop (Steve Swan Guitars), located in Burlingame, California, which specializes in both high quality new and used string basses, and in high quality new and used acoustic guitars and related instruments, since 1990. Steve brings to the group a steady beat, a steady personality, and a team player's spirit.